

JOHN JORDAN.

APRIL 11, 1884.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

Mr. VAN ALSTYNE, from the Committee on Claims, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 3314.]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 3314) for the relief of John Jordan, submit the following report:

From the verified petition of claimant and other proof on file it appears that in 1864 said Jordan was second assistant engineer on the United States ship Neptune, which vessel had early in January been ordered to sail from the port of Philadelphia on a cruise as part of the West India squadron. While on said cruise, one night at about 2 o'clock a. m., when the wind was blowing a gale, the sea running high, and so rough that yawl-boats could not be launched with safety, it was discovered that the vessel was logged and making water very fast.

The officer in command and the men on duty had lost all hope of saving the ship, at least without casting overboard the guns, their shot and shell and all movable articles of heavy nature. At this crisis all hands were piped on deck with signals of extreme peril. The claimant was off duty and sleeping in his berth. Dressing hastily, or only in part, he hastened on deck, was informed that the vessel was sinking, and for reason of his well-known fitness for emergent action was ordered to go below and, if possible, ascertain the cause of the difficulty. He immediately went down into the hold of the vessel, wading into the water breast deep. Being comparatively nude he noticed the sensation produced on his body by the water—that about his ankles and legs was cold while that about his shoulders was warm. This fact led him to suppose that the sea-cock, or injection valves from the sea, by some means had become opened. He immediately returned on deck, informed the commander what he had experienced, and in what he believed the difficulty consisted, and the possibility of saving both the vessel and her armament. Having by his report restored confidence to all, he quickly set to work to, and by great effort succeeded in, closing the valves. In doing this claimant necessarily exposed himself to imminent danger and peril. After the valves were closed the ship was pumped dry, her furnaces refired, and the vessel put safely under way.

The following verified statement of Gad Lyman, at the time chief en-

gineer of the Neptune, discloses the appreciation of the heroic conduct of claimant by his commander, his fellow officers, and the crew :

NEW YORK, Dec. 6th, 1881.

JOHN JORDAN, Esq.,

Late Acting 2d Ass't Eng. U. S. S. Neptune:

DEAR SIR: In answer to your inquiries concerning the facts connected with the voyage of the Neptune from Philadelphia to the Island of St. Domingo, West Indies, during the year 1864, I will say had it not been for your quick appreciation of our danger and your brave and dauntless application of your knowledge and skill to the saving of the ship and crew, I should not have had the privilege of now writing to you.

I well remember that on the night of November 25, 1864, I was awakened by the violence of the gale; that I arose and went to the engine-room; there I immediately saw that the ship was rapidly making water. I immediately reported her condition; then the engines were working (under water), the first ass't eng., James Flynn, being on duty; I immediately came and summoned you from your berth, well knowing your pluck, nerve, and dexterous skill, and in obedience to my commands, and also the order of Capt. J. P. Sanford, you hazarded your life by going down into the engine-room, boldly entering the water in the ship hold, and by rapid and careful examination you found that the sea-cock was wide open and the bilge injection likewise, thereby forming a continuous line or passage from the sea or very near the bottom of the vessel with the bilge or hold of the vessel; the water by this time had made so fast that the engines had stopped. Instantly you proceeded to reverse the position of the sea-cock and put the machinery in proper shape. This you did with complete success, and, thanks to your timely efforts, the ship and all on board were saved, and in a short time everything was in working order again. I well remember, also, that when we reached port and the captain called all hands on deck and publicly stated that to you, with the help of God, the ship and all on board were indebted for their rescue from shipwreck.

In conclusion let me add that I shall always feel grateful that at a time of so great danger I happened to have under my command a man of your implicit obedience, quick perceptions, and brave heart, ready to peril your life for your fellows and your ship in your country's service.

It is a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to say this to you, and I shall be most happy if any good word of mine will serve to secure to you the recognition your brave conduct so richly merits.

Your faithful friend,

GAD LYMAN,

Late Chief Eng. U. S. S. Neptune.

CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK:

On this 24th day of April, 1882, before me personally appeared Gad Lyman, who, being duly sworn, acknowledged on his oath the foregoing affidavit to be true.

[SEAL.]

ARTHUR FITCH,

Notary Public (69), New York Co.

In addition to this, claimant presents testimonial letters or affidavits from Lieut. T. F. Kane, Assistant Paymaster J. F. Tarbell, Gunner John Wren, and others.

Your committee are so impressed by the prompt action, thorough self-control, surprisingly quick and correct conclusions as to cause of disaster, and his extraordinary and successful efforts to save the ship and the lives of all on board, that they feel John Jordan is entitled to have some of these testimonials spread upon the record of Congress in form of report. They take the liberty to subjoin one additional:

PORTSMOUTH, N. H., August 6, 1881.

DEAR MR. JORDAN: In my return here I found your letter of the 26th July. I am very glad to see that you are yet in the land of the living and apparently well. It would give me pleasure to be of any use to you in getting some recognition of your valuable and brave act in going under water and finding the cause of the leak that was fast filling the ship. I remember the time very well, and if I am not wrong you found the "sea-cock" was open, and if you had not succeeded in shutting it the Neptune and all of us would have gone to the bottom. There is no doubt in my mind but that you saved the ship. We all expected she would sink, and you found out the cause of the water coming in and stopped it; so we all owed our lives to you. If I can be of any further use, don't hesitate to call on me, as I would do anything in my

power to help you. If you ever come this way, don't fail to call on me, and we will talk over the times when we were shipmates together.

Hoping you will succeed in what you desire,

I am, truly, yours,

JOHN F. TARBELL,
Paymaster U. S. Navy.

STATE OF MAINE,
County of York, ss :

MARCH 8, 1882.

Personally appeared Paymaster John F. Tarbell, U. S. N., and made oath that the statement herein made is true to his best knowledge and belief.

Before me.

CHAS. R. LITTLEFIELD,
Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF MAINE,
County of York, ss :

CLERK'S OFFICE, SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT,
Alfred, March 24, A. D. 1882.

I, Amos L. Allen, clerk of the supreme judicial court in and for said county of York, being a court of record, do hereby certify that Charles R. Littlefield, of Kittery, Maine, is an acting justice of the peace within and for the county of York, duly qualified to administer oaths and take acknowledgments of deeds and other instruments in writing in said county, and that his commission is dated Feb. 25, 1880, and will expire Feb. 25, 1887.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the supreme judicial court for said State the day and year first above written.

AMOS L. ALLEN, *Clerk.*

The papers in this case show further that at the time of the naval battle between the Monitor and Merrimac, near Fortress Monroe, claimant was on board the steam-tug Dragon. The tug having "blown up" claimant was ordered to abandon her to her fate. Being relieved from further orders, he remained on board, brought the tug to shore, and thereby kept her from sinking, and saved her to the Government.

While the committee most cordially concur in the very high and eminently proper commendations bestowed upon the claimant by the officers and men of the Neptune, and the abundant reason for the award of the nation's gratitude, they fail to find warrant for pecuniary recompense, and therefore report the bill adversely, and recommend that it lie upon the table.

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PART 1
1880

CONTENTS
PAGES
The Origin of the Human Race, by Huxley, 1
The Human Race, by Huxley, 1
The Human Race, by Huxley, 1

THE
JOURNAL
OF
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ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
VOLUME 10
PART 2
1880

CONTENTS
PAGES
The Origin of the Human Race, by Huxley, 1
The Human Race, by Huxley, 1
The Human Race, by Huxley, 1